

plicable to taxonomy, already is a vacant necessity, and its realization might bring botanists closer to the much sought after stability that they all want. With the combined efforts of I. A. P. T., A. S. P. T., and other large groups of botanists it would seem feasible to begin an annual review of the literature on systematic botany for rapid publication. The *Bibliography of Agriculture* comes closest to serving this need.

In this age of mechanical enlightenment it is too much to expect narrowly supported one-man or one-institution productions to continue indefinitely to turn out reference tools such as the *Gray Herbarium Card Index*, *Index Kewensis*, *Card Index to American Botanical Literature*, *Index Nominum Genericorum*, or *Index to Plant Chromosome Numbers*. There also is a need for the continuation of completed works such as Langman's *A selected guide to the literature on the flowering plants of Mexico*, Merrill & Walker's *A bibliography of eastern Asiatic botany*, Pfeifer's *Nomenclator*, Rehder's *Bibliography of cultivated trees and shrubs*, to name only a few. These noble contributions are of lasting international importance and should receive international support for continuance. With such a fine example at hand it may seem unreasonable to ask for even more but I believe that Brummitt's *Index* reaffirms the need for an annual world index to botanical literature and it would be most useful to me if it were in card form or rapidly available printouts. The beginning of such a long term enterprise could be one of the botanical goals of the forthcoming International Biological Years and mechanical sorting methods could satisfy almost everyone with just the right references.—WALLACE R. ERNST, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Botanical Latin. By WILLIAM T. STEARN. xiv + 566 pp., many illustrations. Hafner Publishing Company, 31 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. 10003. 1966. \$16.75.

William T. Stearn's admirable work is not only a guide to the writing and deciphering of Latin descriptions and diagnoses but a valuable compendium of immensely varied botanical information as well. As such, it has earned an indispensable place on every systematic botanist's workshelf. Here is no mere "dry as dust" exposition of paradigms, conjugations, rules of syntax and all the other bases for correct Latin writing but a most entertainingly presented and eminently readable work replete with many topics of absorbing general interest. Among such, for example, is the history of the development of botanical Latin, both pre- and post-Linnaean, as an autonomous and fairly simplified and conventionalized form of expression based, however tenuously, on classical Latin. Another is an exposition of the influence of ancient and classical authors, culminating in the works of Ray and Tournefort, in supplying a concise descriptive vocabulary which was considerably elaborated and crystalized by Linnaeus — to mention only two of the many topics so felicitously touched upon. [One is indirectly admonished as to pitfalls to be avoided by the author's citation of somewhat amusing examples of bad "modern" botanical Latin.] Even as a reference compendium for such diverse matters as latinized geographical names of cities and regions, the formation of epithets based on the names of persons, standard botanical symbols and abbreviations, well illustrated examples of descriptive adjectives, a list of Latin color terms based on Lindley's and J. W. Jackson's works, pronunciation of botanical terms — again choosing at random subjects dealt with — Stearn's excellent and often discursive though nicely organized labor of love will readily recommend itself as a work the systematic botanical worker will feel he cannot afford to deny himself.

The book is divided into four main sections: Introductory chapters on the historical development of botanical Latin and a preliminary chapter on "How to Use This Book"; Grammar; Syntax and Other Matters; and Vocabulary and Bibliography.

In the chapter on syntax, numerous approved examples of diagnoses and descriptions of plants from all the main groups, from Algae, Fungi and Lichens to the Angiosperms, are proffered as models to emulate.

An unusual feature is the extensive vocabulary which devotes some 170 pages to a listing of both Latin-English and English-Latin terms under a single caption. A section which has already proved immensely instructive to the present reviewer is a chapter on the use of Greek words in botanical Latin which contains much information under such subheadings as the indebtedness of botanical Latin to Greek, the nature of word-endings, the gender of Greek nouns and adjectives, the formation of compounds, consonant-changes, a trans-literation of the Greek alphabet, and a vocabulary of Greek word-elements.

It is truly amazing how much information has been compressed by the author into something like 550 pages. A perusal of these pages is very likely to fill in a number of gaps in one's knowledge of classical botany and, more than incidentally, to provide several hours of most pleasurable reading. And it DOES provide, within the confines of a single cover, perhaps for the first time in English at least, all one needs to know about writing, and to a slightly lesser extent, about deciphering Latin botanical descriptions.

Regrettable, in the first printing at least, is the misspelling of the author's name on the spine of the work. — RIMO BACIGALUPI, Jepson Herbarium, Dept. of Botany, University of California, Berkeley.

The Grasses of North Carolina. By H. L. BLOMQUIST. Duke University Press, Durham, N. C., vi + 276 pp. 1948. \$7.50. *Grasses of the Texas Coastal Bend.* By FRANK W. GOULD and THADIS W. BOX. Texas A & M University Press, College Station, Texas. 189 pp. 1965. \$3.25.

In a large and taxonomically difficult family such as the Gramineae, regional treatments are especially valuable in that they treat fewer species than a manual such as Chase (Man. Gr. U. S., rev. ed., 1950) where identification may become difficult simply because of the sheer weight of numbers of species that must be dealt with. Thus, the appearance of state and local grass floras, such as the two reviewed here, is welcome for they serve to make identification easier, thereby stimulating interest in the family and providing more information of grass species and their distribution.

The keys, generic order and, to a lesser extent, descriptions, in Blomquist's treatment of North Carolina grasses all follow quite closely the pattern of Chase. As such the keys have time proven advantages (and errors) and will "run" reasonably well for most genera. A few genera, such as *Aegilops*, will not key in either Chase or Blomquist. The line drawings are clear and, except in a few cases where they have been too reduced, will be valuable in checking identifications. The accompanying detailed distribution maps, one for each species, clearly show the need for additional collections in North Carolina. Notes on the economic importance of various species are interesting and valuable. The chapter on distribution of grasses in North Carolina will be helpful both to the floristic collector and the monographer.

Gould and Box's *Grasses of the Texas Coastal Bend* has been given a new and fresh approach throughout, including keys, descriptions and illustrations. The keys are well written and make use of characters that are relatively easily seen. Even sexual dimorphic species such as *Buchloe dactyloides* may be keyed on the basis of either male or female plants. Notes on geographic distribution, ecological relationships, economic importance as well as a description are provided for each species. Many of the descriptions are too short and general to be of value in checking identifications but in most cases a good illustration is provided. — DENNIS ANDERSON, Division of Biological Sciences, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California